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General Debate 3 (a): Actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development at the global, regional and national levels

3 (b): Sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration

Statement submitted by People of Good Heart, a non-intergovernmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social council[2]

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[1] E/CN.9/2018/1.
[2] The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

Sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration

Globally, countries depend on one another for growth, development and sustainability. No country is an island on its own. Countries are greater than each other in terms of technology, industries and development.

To maintain trade equilibrium and even development of a country's international trade, mobility of people from one country to another is inevitable. Therefore, human mobility and international migration play a very vital role in development.

In general terms, migration can be defined as the movement of people from one place to another. It may be movement from rural areas to urban areas or in some cases, movement from urban areas to rural areas.

In most cases, movement of rural areas to urban areas is very prominent. Human mobility is very essential and inevitable for self-development and growth. People move from one place to another in search of better opportunities.

International migration, that is, movement of people from one country to another country is very prominent and ideal for the growth of the country.

According to Rousseau in his "discovery of the community" "the body politic, is also a moral being possessed of a will, and this general will, which tends always to the preservation and welfare of the whole and of every part, and is the source of the laws, constitutes for all the members of the state, and to it, the rule of what is just and unjust ...",

W.W. Rostow argues that for development to occur, there must be a "big-push" factor which in most cases does not originate in a country, but comes from outside the country.

Cities, human mobility, and international migration therefore, play a very crucial role in the development of a country.

Internally, people do migrate from the rural areas to the urban areas in search of opportunities, in particular "white-collar jobs" which until now are often not available in the rural areas. As a consequence, urban areas become congested and some people who migrate to cities, do not succeed and become part of the "urban poor".

Internationally, people often move from one country to another in search of better opportunities which cannot be obtained in their home country.

The question is how to manage this mobility and international migration, knowing fully well that mobility and migration is inevitable.

The answer to this is that people move from one place to another for survival. For example, in Nigeria the Fulani Herdsmen move from the North to the South, to the East, looking for grass to graze their cattle. People move from all regions of the country to Lagos and Abuja for employment which in some cases is not available.

Internationally, people move from developing countries to developed countries in search of greater opportunities, often linked to economic opportunities.

In some cases, people migrate from one country to another as part of a diplomatic representation. As said earlier no country is an island on its own. Hence the need for international responses, international trade, and international co-existence.

Be that as it may, how do we sustain cities-human mobility and international migration?

(a) Balance of trade: countries do trade with each other. For example, Nigeria trades with the United Kingdom and the United States of America. There is a need for a trade balance between the two countries and the exchange rate should be clearly defined and strictly followed.

(b) Technology transfer: people from especially developing countries, usually migrate to developed countries for knowledge and ideas, which properly digested, can lead to technological development of their country. To sustain international migration this knowledge should be made available to encourage other countries and individuals to patronize or visit the country to gather knowledge.

(c) Security: Security, urban mobility and international migration, play a fundamental role in cities. International security organizations have a very vital role in this regard.

The movement of the people to and from any countries should be properly regulated to ensure that no dangerous weapons or illegal substances are carried into countries of transit or host countries.

(d) Trade Regulation: the terms of trade between two countries should be properly established and any contravention should attract the maximum penalty as indicated in the terms of trade.

(e) Migration Laws: laws guiding the movement of people into and outside the country should be properly defined.

Overall, migration should be managed and proper travel documentation must be obtained by migrants.

(f) Public Awareness: immigrants should be educated regarding the laws of the host country so they do not break the rules and regulations of the host country.

In case of cities and human mobility, governments should ensure that necessary infrastructure is provided both in the urban and rural areas. This will reduce the migration from rural to urban areas and ensure that people in the urban areas are well catered for through the provision of industries, generation of employment, good roads, and all other facilities that will cater for the welfare of the people.